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THE GREAT CAREER


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BY
J. ERNEST
RATTENBURY



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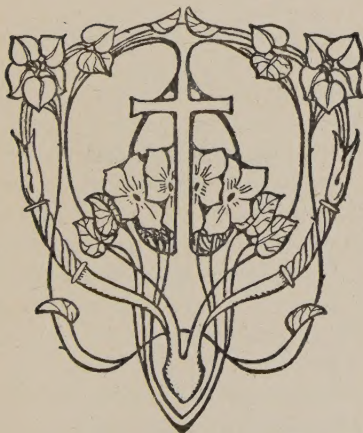
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THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PETER

i. I-II.

SIMON PETER, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained a like precious faith with us in the righteousness of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ : grace to you and peace be multiplied in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord ; seeing that His divine power hath granted unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness through the knowledge of Him that called us by His own glory and virtue. Whereby He hath granted unto us His precious and exceeding great promises ; that through these ye may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world by lust. Yea, and for this very cause adding on your part all diligence, in your faith supply virtue ; and in your virtue knowledge ; and in your knowledge temperance ; and in your temperance patience ; and in your patience godliness ; and in your godliness love of the brethren ;

and in your love of the brethren love ; for if these things are yours and abound, they make you to be not idle nor unfruitful unto the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. For he that lacketh these things is blind, seeing only what is near, having forgotten the cleansing from his old sins. Wherefore, brethren, give the more diligence to make your calling and election sure, for if ye do these things ye shall never stumble: for thus shall be richly supplied unto you the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.



The Great Career

IT is probable that St Peter would have been very surprised if he had known that his famous exhortation—"Give the more diligence to make your calling and election sure"—could have become a storm centre of Christian controversy. Around the words "calling and election" controversy notwithstanding has raged for centuries. In these words he really summed up and applied what he had written in the first paragraph of his Second Epistle—he is really exhorting men to follow a great career—to be certain through all diligent service and strenuous endeavour that they should accomplish the career

for which they had a vocation and for which they had been selected.

His conception of the greatness of the Christian career is indicated in the 3rd and 4th verses of his Second Epistle:—

“His divine nature hath granted us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him that called us by His own glory and virtue . . . that ye may become *partakers of the divine nature.*”

Peter was always a man with a future, and his heart glowed as he thought of the unlimited possibilities of the Christian life. And yet his own severe discipline had not been without fruit, for he feels that this career may be lost unless it be cultivated. So in verses 5, 6, and 7, he says:—

“Yea, and for this cause adding on your part all diligence, in your faith supply virtue; and in your virtue knowledge; and in your knowledge self-control; and in your self-control patience

(endurance); and in your endurance godliness; and in your godliness love of the brethren; and in your love of the brethren love."

So much does he feel that a career must be cultivated to be successful, that he even emphasises the danger of neglecting cultivation (verse 9):—

"For he that lacketh these things is blind, seeing only what is near (closing his eyes to all except what is near), having forgotten the cleansing from his old sins"—and this is further emphasised by reading verse 8 negatively thus:—

"For if these are not yours and abound not, you become idle and unfruitful unto the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ." But if a man sees the possibilities of his career and cultivates them we read (verse 11):—

"Thus shall be richly supplied unto you the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." Can we wonder, there-

fore, that the Apostle exhorts his followers to cultivate with strenuous energy their great career—"to make their calling and election sure"?

I. THE GREAT CAREER

"Called to be partakers of the divine nature."

What a career! Are we able to catch any glimpse of its sublime splendours? Partners in God! Every human career fades away by comparison. What are the dignities and successes of human strife as compared with this? Such a vision should indeed

"Nerve our faint endeavour"!

Perhaps an ordinary vocation is the best illustration of the great career. Men rarely gain eminent success in any sphere of life unless they have a *natural* capacity for the occupation in which they have been successful. Christians like poets are born and not made. "By

labour," says Wesley, "a man may become a tolerable imitator of Spenser, Shakespeare, or Milton, and may heap together pretty compound epithets as 'pale-eyed,' 'meek-eyed,' and the like, but unless he is born a poet he will never attain the genuine spirit of poetry."

A career so sublime as partnership in God is only open to those who have a capacity for it. A man must be *born* for such a career to succeed in it. Lives of great men not only indicate natural capacity, but often some awakening to their natural capacity through the stimulus of an external event has enabled them to realise their call. Take the call of a prophet. The story of Isaiah in his 6th chapter shows a man greatly impressed by an external event. His vision came to him in the memorable year King Uzziah died. Stirred to his depths by this sad event, he went into the temple. A deeply patriotic man, he pondered on the destiny of his own nation. The

good King of Judah had died and the kingdom was threatened with many foes internal and external. Isaiah, an offspring of the Jewish aristocracy, deeply moved by the traditions of his race, by its perils and its possibilities, naturally reflected on the politics of his time, and wondered how Judah might be victorious over her foes. Judah needed above all things a leader. Where could such a man be found?

In the solemn hush of the temple Isaiah, deeply moved, had a vision of the Most High. His own unworthiness drove him to despair, but God's words drove him to consecration, and this man, anxiously wondering where a leader was to come from, heard the call himself and said, "Here am I, send me."

Now Isaiah was always fitted to be a prophet. Like Paul he was born and devised for this great end. He might never, however, have realised his own meaning except through the deep

emotional stirring of an external event, which made him sensitive to the heavenly vision. He was called and accepted the call, and he was elected. He saw the possibilities of his own life, and he realised that his own destiny was to be an instrument for the hand of God.

This prophetic call is no isolated instance of God's methods. Biographies of great men in every sphere of human activity give innumerable like instances. Great soldiers have realised their own possibilities as boys by contact with some distinguished military hero, or by the stirring of their souls by some national victory or disaster. Lord Shaftesbury always had in him the possibilities of a great philanthropist, but the sight of a pauper's funeral when a boy at Harrow made him cry "Here am I, send me." A lad listening to a prince in the pulpit, and thrilled by the power of the preacher, resolves that he too will tell forth the great gospel

message. He was born to preach, but it was through some supreme object lesson of the preacher's work that he got a glimpse of what he himself might be. How often a father's success or enthusiasm in some vocation kindles the fuel already existing in the boy's heart and imagination, and he follows the same career. The call involves first of all a natural capacity for the sphere of life followed, and secondly an awakening to that possibility.

With such illustrations in our mind we are able to understand Peter's view of the great career. For he speaks of the "Knowledge of Him who called us by *His own glory and virtue* to be partakers of the divine nature."

The glory and virtue of Jesus Christ awaken us to our own possibility. The glory and virtue of Jesus Christ call us. There stretches forth before our eyes the most glorious career on earth, by which we climb to the stars and become

partners in God. Just as the military instinct is awakened in some boy by a noble living example of military skill, so the God instinct is awakened in our hearts by the supreme example of the Divine.

The glory and virtue of Jesus Christ call us. Do they not call? He stands before us the *perfect* Man. Not sinless merely, but blazing with glory and virtue. We behold His grace and truth and know He is the only Begotten of the Father. We see Jesus crowned, and the sight thrills us with longing and hope and resolution. He is our great forerunner—He has trodden the path we must tread. He has triumphed over all our foes. For the first time we see what the human life means. We have had other aspirations—swelling ambitions of human place and power—we have hungered after world-wide influence—distinction in the world of scholarship—the vast wealth of the

millionaire, and we see Jesus crowned with thorns and yet crowned with glory and honour. We see a life laid down—love daring and love dying—we behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world, and everything else grows dim or seems tawdry—the great distinctions of human life look mean and even contemptible—we have seen the King—we have seen the glory of the pearl of great price, and we know that our wisdom is in selling all things to gain it. Yes, we have had that vision in the sanguine and heroic days of youth—to be Christlike is the one thing worth striving after. Does the vision grow dim with years? Let us remember that we saw it once, and then at least we heard the call and knew it might be accomplished. Just as the great preacher awakes the preaching capacity of some men, so the vision of love incarnate—love dying—the vision of, and the glory and virtue of Christ

reveals to a man his true meaning. He sees his career—it leads through difficult paths, by narrow gorges, over mountains in snow, but on the summit is the golden city, shining with the light of the Lamb.

But a vocation like that so far surpassing any human career is surely only for the highest of the race! Few indeed are called to be great leaders—great statesmen—how many fewer, you say, to be partners in God? But the extraordinary thing is that this is a common call. It comes to each man with the capacity for the divine. And who is he? Each man upon this earth, for although every man cannot be a Prime Minister, every man can be a king! one of those monarchs of whom God is King of kings.

This revelation of our own possibility is simply staggering if we realise it. Do we hear the call? It comes from Calvary. That call awakens sleeping

humanity and shows men what they might be. *A man may be what Christ is.* "We shall be like Him when we see Him as He is."

Let us understand the scope and altitude of our career. The virtue and glory of Jesus Christ manifesting the Divine Nature calls us to partnership in the Divine Nature.

It is a call to the very highest ! Not to the sinlessness of Christ, but to His own glory and virtue. We are not merely called to be spotless. The end of the Christian life is not to wear white garments, but to be white men wearing white garments. It is not to do nothing evil, but to do everything well. The standard of Christ is in danger of being lowered by conceiving it in the negative terms of sinlessness—indeed, the colourless Christ of much modern devotion has been an unattractive figure to many men and women who have blood in their veins.

Christ is much more than sinless—He is glorious. “I am the Light of the world.” We are not called to respectability, to quiet unobtrusive negative harmlessness. We are called to heavenly perfection. “By glory to glory” is the stair by which we climb to the throne of God. We are called to be partners in God.

The ideal of Christian harmlessness is positively harmful. To be a man who does nothing wrong is hardly preferable to being a man who does much wrong and much right as well. To do something is a more attractive ideal than to do nothing. Christ calls us to be and to do. Our career is one of splendid activities. Spirituality is not a consumptive girl with a hectic flush, but a strong man rejoicing to run a race. The glory and virtue of Jesus is not the dim mellowed light of ecclesiastical art, but the blazing blinding light of the sun. We are called to be partners in God.

And anyone, everyone is called.

To whom is Peter writing? Early Christian converts—ignorant and uncultivated people—many of them have been earthly, sensual, devilish. He does not come to them with a message of slight improvement—of gradual deliverance—he goes to the lowest with a call to the highest.

Mr A. C. Benson, in writing of the education of boys, says :

“I don’t believe that in education, the highest motive is always the best ; indeed, the most effective motive, in dealing with immature minds, is the thing which we have to discover and use. I mean, for instance, that I think it is probably more effective to say to a boy who is disposed to be physically indolent, ‘ You have a chance of getting your colours this half, and I should like to see you get them,’ than to say, ‘ I don’t want you to think about colours. I want you to play football for the glory

of God, because it makes you into a stronger, more wholesome, more cheerful man.' It seems to me that boys should learn for themselves that there are often better and bigger reasons for having done a thing than the reason that made them do it. What makes an object seem desirable to a boy is that others often desire to have it too, and that he should be the fortunate person to get it. I don't see how the sense of other people's envy and disappointment can be altogether subtracted from the situation—it certainly is one of the elements which makes success seem desirable to many boys—though a generous nature will not indulge the thought."

Mr Benson is very likely a wise educationalist, and understands the nature of the British boy. I quote him neither with approval nor disapproval, but whether his views are right or wrong they are very different from the

Apostle Peter's. The apostolic method is very different, and is a method of extraordinary daring. Peter stands on the brink of a horrible pit and looks at the men and women who are simply drenched in sensuality and fleshly foulness in the mire and clay at the bottom. He does not stretch out a hand to them and say: "I will pull you up. You shall walk on the main road," but he points to the sun-kissed summit where Christ sits in heavenly places. You can see the stars in the *day-time* from a coal mine. And in that deep miry pit the foulest have the vision of the purest, and the lowest are wooed to the highest.

Is it reasonable? No! It is apostolic! Men filled with the Holy Ghost are not usually called reasonable. They are accused of being intoxicated. "These men are full of new wine." But *is* it reasonable? Were they not bound to fall? Could they really win

such magnificent heights? Was it possible for these pagan sensualists—men who had been the victims of evil habits, and who were the offspring of generations of people who belonged in many instances to the criminal classes of the community—was it not cruel to indicate the heights to men at such depths? Peter knew the difficulty, and he provided for it. He would never have dared to echo that call if he had nothing else to say. Peter had fallen too often himself not to know the danger of slipping, and so he says (verse 4), “Whereby He hath granted unto us His precious and exceeding great promises.” Yes, he knew how painful is the climbing to the summit, but he remembers the promises, precious and exceeding great, and does he not think of one that includes them all in which he finds comfort and gives it to those to whom he writes, when he says “promises”: “Lo, I am with you

always, even unto the end of the world."

The Christian career is the greatest career in the world, unimaginably superior to everything that human ambition prospects and desires, and its most extraordinary characteristic is that it is a career for everyone. In every man, woman, and child in the world there is a great capacity for God, and the glory and virtue of Jesus Christ, the actual life lived and the death died of the Man who was more than a man, and yet very man, calls all men to partnership in the Divine Nature.

II. THE CULTIVATION OF THE GREAT CAREER

The accomplishment of a great career involves not only natural capacity, and the awakening to natural capacity, but it also involves the *cultivation* of the natural capacity.

“Give the more diligence to make your calling and election sure”—St Peter gives a careful account of the details of such cultivation in the 5th, 6th, and 7th verses of his Epistle—“adding on your part all diligence, in your faith supply virtue; in your virtue knowledge; in your knowledge self-control (patience); in your patience godliness; in your godliness love of the brethren; in your love of the brethren love.”

Many men with natural capacity for great human service fail for the simple reason that they never cultivate it. We read of “Village Hampdens” and “Mute inglorious Miltons.” Why does a Hampden remain in a village, and why is a Milton “mute and inglorious”? Very often, you say, it is because they have no opportunity for development. That this is often the case I do not deny, but I do assert that many a Milton is mute because he is lazy, and many a

Hampden remains in a village because he never works. The failure of genius is caused by lack of diligence as often as by lack of opportunity. The highest genius is prodigal of leaves rather than fruit if there is no diligent service. Men become "idle and unfruitful if they lack diligence" (verse 8).

A man, for instance, has a gift for some form of art, and can make a tolerable success in a few minutes, therefore he neglects careful toil and declines to walk the narrow way of discipline, the only way to permanent success. What can be more short-sighted? "He only sees what is near" (verse 9). Immediate success is won, but final usefulness is sacrificed. For the accomplishment of the great career there must be the shedding of blood. Men must live laborious days. There is no royal way to great human influence except the way of discipline. Genius is often left behind in the race because

of its reliance on sudden and brilliant spurts.

“I sing but as the linnet sings,”
said Tennyson.

“I lisped in numbers for the numbers came,” says Pope, but a study of Tennyson’s biography will show how long and careful was the preparation of his linnet’s song. “*Ars celare artem.*” The man whose work is the most natural is often the most painstaking artist.

A man is called to be an artist and he fails to cultivate that gift—what is the result? He remains a man with an artistic temperament, and that is much more of a domestic nuisance than a public benefit.

And so it is with the call of God. Many men depend upon some ancient religious rapture, some glowing experience of youth, and instead of being partakers of the divine nature, they remain in the infant school. The Master

sees them—men richly endowed with religious instinct, and finds foliage, when He seeks for fruit. He would prefer to see the fruits that are to be found in the man outside the churches who loves his brother.

The great artist—great in capacity and great in accomplishment—knows the value of discipline. He sees his possibilities and with splendid toil achieves them.

Robert Louis Stevenson was a great artist and a born writer. He has enriched our literature with many immortal volumes. Did he depend upon his birthright? No! He heard the call and cultivated it. What an interesting and illuminating piece of biography we have in these familiar words:—

“All through my boyhood and youth I was known and pointed out for the pattern of an idler; and yet I was always busy on my own private end, which was to learn to write. I kept

always two books in my pocket, one to read, one to write in. As I walked my mind was busy fitting what I saw with appropriate words; when I sat by the roadside, I would either read, or a pencil and a penny version book would be in my hand to note down the features of the scene or commemorate some halting stanzas. Thus I lived with words. And what I thus wrote was for no ulterior use, it was written consciously for practice. It was not so much that I wished to be an author (though I wished that too) as that I vowed that I would learn to write. That was a proficiency that tempted me; and I practised to acquire it, as men learn to whittle, in a wager with myself. . . . Whenever I read a book or a passage that particularly pleased me, in which a thing was said or an effect rendered with propriety, in which there was either some conspicuous force or some happy distinction in the style, I must

sit down at once and set myself to ape that quality. I was unsuccessful and I knew it ; and tried again, and was again unsuccessful, and always unsuccessful ; but at least in these vain bouts, I got some practice in rhythm, in harmony, in construction and the co-ordination of parts. I have thus played the sedulous ape to Hazlitt, to Lamb, to Wordsworth, to Sir Thomas Brown, to Defoe, to Hawthorne, to Montaigne, to Baudelaire, and to Obermann."

It is just so with the great career. If we are to accomplish it not only shall we hear the heavenly call, but we shall "For this cause add on our part all diligence, and in our faith supply virtue ; and in our virtue knowledge ; and in our knowledge self-control ; and in our self-control patience ; and in our patience godliness, and in our godliness love of the brethren ; and in our love of the brethren love."

There is the Christian discipline of

the awakened capacity for the career of partnership in God.

It does not sound very easy! No, it does not; and in many ways it is not. You say you like the old-fashioned way of Holiness Conventions better. Well, what is it? Here are two verses of a well-known hymn:—

“What is our calling’s glorious hope
But inward holiness,
For this to Jesus I look up,
I calmly wait for this.

“From all iniquity, from all,
He shall my soul redeem,
*In Jesus I believe and shall
Believe myself to Him.*”

That is easier, you say.

“In Jesus I believe and shall
Believe myself to Him.”

Well, is it easier? What do you mean by faith? What do you mean by believing yourself to Him? “Faith without works is dead.” An unproductive faith takes you from Him. The only faith

which believes you to Him is the faith which makes you grow into His image, and increase into His stature. It is faith which supplies virtue. Any faith which does not develop this discipline of the soul is quite worthless. Indeed, it is a question whether it is faith at all. Saving faith is a faith that works.

Now consider the discipline of faith. Faith transports us into a new world. "We live by faith on the son of God." It is at once the stride we take into the unseen which becomes seen to us as we take it, and the atmosphere by which we breathe in the unseen. It therefore underlies all the life of the soul in its new conditions.

Nothing, as St Paul shows by his illustrations, better illustrates the Christian life—the life of faith—than physical exercise. The Christian life is spiritual exercise in new conditions. Take swimming as an illustration. In

order to swim one must get into the water, and when one is in the water it is only by the exercise of limbs and lungs that progress can be made. Faith is the initial plunge into the new element, but in the faith virtue must be supplied. Merely plunge into the new life and nothing will result except drowning—you will go to the bottom. It is by the exercise of our spiritual limbs that progress can be made. In our faith supply virtue; and in our virtue knowledge—not in our knowledge virtue. We learn by doing—we do not do by knowing. This is essentially the Christian teaching about knowledge. All we learn *about* swimming will not teach us to swim. We must swim first and then we learn how to swim. Real knowledge does come by experiment. Theories are truths just as they are verified. Much that professes to call itself truth is mere speculation. For fruitless speculation Jesus had little tolerance.

Ingenious discussion as to whether a man born blind is the victim of heredity or metempsychosis does not interest Him. "He must work the works of Him that sent Him while it is day." The man who learns of Him takes His yoke upon him. The way of knowing is the way of doing. Verified theory involves experiment. The real knowledge comes along the course of acting and by no other way. By struggles, successes, and failures we know.

"In your knowledge supply self-control." In any athletics one's first tendency is to exuberant energy-waste of strength. The whole force of the body is often directed to an object which requires little force, but some skill and experience. Experience teaches the athlete not to expend all his strength on the first onset, and out of the soul exercised to knowledge comes control of self. What energy a novice applies to his bicycle, and what an erratic

course he runs. Experience and knowledge give him control, and in his control is learnt patience—endurance. This is the last accomplishment of the man who is cultivating some athletic exercise. In some senses it is the highest development of manhood. The man who has learnt to wait has learnt to win.

Now we have in this development several grades of mental development. We have the history of the evolution of the man. The self-controlled enduring man has reached the height of his self-development. I would even venture to add to Peter and say this, In your endurance you have supplied MANLINESS, and in your endurance, in your manliness, supply godliness! The strong controlled, enduring man—the manly man is the godly man. The man after God's own heart was a splendid human being, whatever were his human faults. You cannot get deep devoutness and godlike character out of unmanly people.

If we are to love the Lord our God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength, it is well to have a heart, soul, mind, and strength with which to love Him. In the manlike man you supply the godlike man. Man is after all the most godlike creature we know. The more therefore he is a man, the more is he like God.

Between Peter and Dante there seems to exist some difference of opinion concerning the cultivation of the soul. It is interesting to compare this passage with Dante's "Purgatory." To Dante the Christian soul was cultivated by a series of cleansings; to Peter it was cultivated by a series of *clothings*. Dante sees the Christian man passing through certain processes of purification, and when his seven deadly sins are washed away, he enters into the Earthly Paradise on the summit of the Mount of Purgatory, restored to the innocence of our first parents, and thus he is fitted

to enter into the heavenly Paradise, until at last he comes to the throne of God.

Peter believes a man is *cleansed* at the beginning. His call is to the men who have escaped "the corruption that is in the world through lust." And then he exhorts men to struggle towards the ideal manhood, not by a series of cleansings, but by a series of clothings—not to prehistoric innocence, but to experience made beautiful and glad with the glory of dignified human character. The self-controlled man of Peter is fitter for entrance into Paradise than the merely sin-cleansed man of Dante.

"In your godliness supply love of the brethren."

This is a godlike rather than a manlike quality. The first godlike thing in man is his love for others.

"Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction and to keep himself unspotted from the world."

The first part of the development of Christianity is on the line of getting, the second is on the line of giving. One is human—the other divine. Love of the brethren—the actual love of real individuals—this is the way in which love itself can be cultivated. Love is a higher thing than love of the brethren. In love of the brethren supply LOVE. It can be extracted from a thousand loving deeds to others, like perfume is extracted from a thousand flowers. Love is the very essence of our deeds of love. Love is different from love of the brethren—it is the divine essence extracted from love of the brethren. You cannot get it without love of the brethren. To feel love to God and have no love to the brethren is a common but dangerous form of Christian self-deception. Nobody ever loved God who did not love his brother also, and the people who say they love God without real devotion to their brethren

are self-deceived people and stand in great peril of their souls. The divine love—the essential love—is extracted like perfume from many deeds of love, and when in the love of the brethren we supply love we have actually climbed up into partakership of the Divine Nature, for GOD IS LOVE.

In this way, and in this way only,

“In Jesus we believe and shall
Believe ourselves to Him.”

Therefore if our career is to be assured we must give the utmost diligence to its cultivation, and neglect no point of discipline great or small. However certain our call is, that call can only be realised as we give the more diligence to make it sure.

III. THE CLIMAX OF THE GREAT CAREER

“Thus shall be richly supplied unto you entrance into the eternal king-

dom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.”

Here is the accomplishment of the great career.

When one reads about this abundant entrance, one naturally thinks of such an experience as John Bunyan describes. Christian and Hopeful have crossed the river and we read :—

“Then the heavenly host gave a great shout, saying—‘Blessed are they that are called to the marriage-supper of the Lamb.’ There came out also at this time to meet them several of the King’s trumpeters, clothed in white and shining raiment, who, with melodious noises and loud, made even the heavens echo with their sound. These trumpeters saluted Christian and his fellow with ten thousand welcomes from the world, and this they did with shouting and sound of trumpet. This done, they compassed them round about on every side ; some went before, some behind,

and some on the right hand, some on the left (as it were to guard them through the upper regions), continually sounding as they went, with melodious noise, in notes on high ; so that the very sight was, to them that could behold it, as if heaven itself was come down to meet them.

“ . . . Thus they came up to the gate . . . Now I saw in my dream that these two men went in at the gate ; and lo ! as they entered they were transfigured, and they had raiment put on that shone like gold. There were also that met them with harps and crowns, and gave them to them ; the harps to praise withal, and the crowns in token of honour. Then I heard in my dream that all the bells in the city rang again for joy ; and that it was said unto them, ‘ Enter into the joy of your Lord.’ ”

Such descriptions seem worth effort, but what is the great joy of those who abundantly enter the kingdom ? Let

it not be forgotten, not ease and trumpets and applause, but character and Christ-likeness. Men who suppose the early Christians strove after an earthly heaven of golden crowns and harps are but superficial readers of the New Testament. They all had a great and growing hope of glory, but what was it? Listen! "We know that if He shall be manifested, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is."

And everyone that hath this hope set on Him, purifieth himself even as He is pure."

The climax of our great career is to be like Him, and the promise to diligent cultivators of the vocation is a rich entrance into Christ-likeness.

Remember the call—remember the glory and virtue which calls! You have read Jack London's "Call of the Wild." You have read of the surging wolf-like blood in a dog which calls him back to the condition of his ancestors. The call

of the wild ; we know that, but the clearest call is the call of "the glory and virtue of Christ," which calls us to partnership in God. The call of the Spirit. Do we not hear that call? It tells us that the greatest career in the world is simple goodness.

As a young minister I had duties to perform in a Midland village. I cannot forget a simple experience that once came to me. One day, carelessly, almost flippantly, I went into the cottage of a lonely sick woman. I entered, but no sooner was I inside than I became reverent in spirit and knew I stood on holy ground. There lay the poor old soul with deeply-lined furrowed face, lonely, having endured for many years poverty and great pain of body. Her face was luminous with inward light and her voice deep with reverent joy. As she talked she gave to the coarsest soul some vision of the eternal—to be in her presence was to know here was one who

had a peace the world neither gives nor takes away. A little cottage—an old and insignificant woman, and yet a temple of the living God—a holy place. I would like to have introduced some of the great ones of the earth into that little room—a Napoleon Bonaparte—a Cecil Rhodes—men who did great things—for I believe they were great enough to realise that here in that simple fragrant life was something greater than any human attainment—the sweet strong life of a good Christian woman.

You think of His little ones. Men and women we have known—their lives translated Christ for us into modern life as no scholarship could do. In them we saw His glory and we bowed our heads before the Lord.

And so the call came and comes. Oh! that some reader of this booklet might realise that in comparison with a life of simple goodness all worldly pomp

is tawdry. Our career is to be partners in God.

And here is our encouragement. Cultivate it and we shall have an abundant entrance.

“To patient faith the prize is sure,
And those who to the end endure
The cross shall wear the crown.

“Oh blessed, bliss inspiring hope.
It lifts the drooping spirit up,
It brings to life the dead.

“Our conflicts here shall soon be past
And you and I ascend at last
Triumphant with our Head.”



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